

**Chesapeake Forest Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting
Wednesday, November 20, 2002
Worcester Room, Commons Building, Salisbury University**

Committee Members:

Ellen Lawler, Salisbury University
Jan Graham, Sierra Club
Jeff Leitner, The Fund for Animals
Steven C. Goss, Maryland Sportsmen Association
Lori Lilly, UMES
Cecelia G. Dennis, Rural Legacy
Sandy Coyman, Worcester County
Skip Jones, Parker Forestry Services, Inc.

Absent:

Keith Underwood, Environmental Consultant
Delegate Rudolph Cane
Annette Cottman
Pete Alexander, Glatfelter Pulp Wood
Natalie Chabot, Dorchester County Tourism
Russ Brinsfield, Mayor/Vienna & Director, Wye Research Center
Sen. J. Lowell Stoltzfus, Maryland Senate

MD DNR Staff:

John F. Wilson, Resource Planning
Raj Williams, Resource Planning
Kenneth Jolly, Forest Service, Assoc. Director
Kip Powers, Forest Service
Michael Schofield, Forest Service/Chesapeake Forest Project Manager
Holly May, Forest Service/Chesapeake Forest
John Moulis, Wildlife & Heritage Service
Tim Larney, Wildlife & Heritage Service

Public Attendees:

Hal Runner
Don Kronner
Petrera Pasquale
Joan Maloof
Paul Eriksson
Russ Hill
Jennifer Good
Heron Boyce
Paul Schulze
Trisha Benton
W. Allen Jones

Col. Louis L. Murray, Jr. (ret.)

Meeting Summary:

The meeting started with the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) approving the minutes from the October meeting with one change: CAC members Jeff Leitner, Ellen Lawler, Lori Lilly and Jan Graham support written language in the Sustainable Forest Management Plan (SFMP) stating that the Department will reduce herbicide use by using lower concentrations of chemicals and other methods of vegetative control. The October meeting minutes are posted on the Chesapeake Forest website at: www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/Chesapeakeforests.

Michael Schofield presented the Chesapeake Forest Manager's Report, which included brief descriptions of the following items:

- 72 acres of completed thinning,
- 96 acres of thinning sold,
- Ongoing vegetative monitoring studies of reduced herbicide rates in cooperation with Salisbury University,
- Continued general maintenance work on Tyler nature trail,
- Information & Education sharing with the Maryland Conservation Council,
- Preparing to pay 15 percent revenues to counties, and
- Received approval to open four tracts to public hunting for December 16, 2002.

Before the review of the FY04 Annual Work Plan, Steven Goss and Jeff Leitner requested a general description of what process was used to obtain approval for public hunting areas. John Wilson explained that the CAC had reviewed and approved the criteria for public use. The criteria were applied to Chesapeake Forest lands, and tracts were potentially selected. Secretary Fox recently gave his approval to open four tracts for public use as a first phase. Jeff Leitner asked how recently these public use areas had been hunted and how many acres were approved. Michael Schofield responded that it was approximately 2,000 acres and had been hunted as recently as a few weeks ago. Jan Graham asked if these public-hunting lands included other types of public use outside of the hunting season. John Wilson answered yes; other uses are and will be permitted. Jeff Leitner questioned the process of determining Chesapeake Forest public use areas, specifically when other user groups would have an opportunity to voice their opinion regarding the use of these lands. John Wilson responded that the Annual Work Plan process involves a review of potential land uses by user groups. Mr. Leitner was concerned about the opportunity for the public to express their opinions regarding recreational and other land uses. John Wilson explained that tonight was a good opportunity for the CAC members and the public to make their opinions known. He also explained that there would be a period during which written comments could be submitted. (Note: Only three tracts were ultimately opened for public use, based on the input received – see press release.)

Jan Graham asked about the length of the hunting season. Mike Schofield responded that public hunting tracts on the Chesapeake Forest follow the major state hunting seasons and time periods. Ms. Graham asked if these tracts were closed to other types of

public use. Mr. Schofield responded that the tracts were open to other types of public use. Mr. Leitner and Ms. Graham were concerned not only about the safety of individuals using these tracts for a purpose other than hunting, they were also concerned that the public hunting designation/connotation would preclude other citizens from wanting to use that particular tract.

Skip Jones asked if the public hunting areas would be open all at once according to the 29,000-acre requirement of SB 599. Mike Schofield responded that a phasing strategy had been developed to make some lands available each year. Skip Jones asked if revenues from hunt clubs would be lost over time. John Wilson responded that yes, hunt club revenues would be lost on the tracts identified for public use.

John Wilson gave some general comments regarding the FY04 Annual Work Plan. He stated that this review was an opportunity for the public to decide if the land manager was following the guidelines of the Sustainable Forest Management Plan (SFMP). He indicated that the Annual Work Plan covered forest management, watershed improvement, recreational, ecological restoration, and maintenance activities for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2003. John also outlined the general time frame for the Annual Work Plan process as follows:

- January-May; land manager develops draft plan, based on guidelines of SFMP, and submits draft plan to the Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team),
- May-September; ID team review and comment; part of their review involves a field tour to resolve problems/concerns collectively and final team comments are submitted to land manager for consideration and possible plan revision,
- November; draft submitted to public for review and comment; land manager makes any necessary revisions and submits for approval, and
- Following plan approval, land manager assembles contractors for work.

Mike Schofield gave a Powerpoint presentation on the FY04 Annual Work Plan. He stated that the public has 30 days to submit written comments.

Jeff Leitner was concerned about the lack of references to public use in the presentation and the SFMP. Mr. Leitner suggested adding a bullet in the SFMP highlighting the potential of other types of recreational use. Jan Graham agreed with Mr. Leitner. Mr. Leitner was also concerned that the brainstorming of previous CAC meetings regarding public use other than hunting, especially to generate revenue, were not included or mentioned as possibilities. Mr. Schofield asked Mr. Leitner to please submit his comments in writing.

Steven Goss suggested that part of the hunting license fees should go to the Chesapeake Forest project. Mike Schofield asked that Mr. Goss should submit that comment in writing.

Sandy Coyman asked Mike Schofield what he envisioned as long-term priorities. Mike replied that sustainability on a variety of fronts is the primary goal. Mr. Coyman asked if and how much revenue thinning generated for the Chesapeake Forest. Mr.

Schofield responded that thinning do produce revenue, although second thinning typically produce more revenue than first thinning because they contain more saw timber.

Skip Jones asked for more detail on how the ID Team process works, specifically in reference to Ecologically Sensitive Areas, and did Mike feel that forestry is “losing ground” to endangered species. Mike Schofield replied that he did not feel that forestry was losing ground in this matter. He explained that the ID Team reviews all proposed forest management activities and that he can still manage for timber production, taking Ecologically Sensitive Areas into account. Skip Jones asked if forestry was losing ground with the conversion of pine plantations to hardwoods. Mike Schofield replied that the forest would be sustainable but that some areas will not be managed as intensively as they were at a corporate level for pine production.

Jan Graham questioned if grants were available for Chesapeake Forest management activities. Mike Schofield replied yes, for example watershed restoration grants help offset costs for related projects.

Lori Lilly asked how written comments were submitted for inclusion in Annual Work Plans. Mike Schofield stated that written comments would be included as a separate section.

Ellen Lawler asked if marking riparian buffers was an ongoing process and how these riparian buffers were excluded from aerial spraying. Mike responded that stream buffers were marked as per activity and that the planes had on-board GPS systems to shut off spraying over riparian areas/buffers.

Jeff Leitner was concerned about the vague process for making specific decision within Annual Work Plans regarding public use. Mr. Leitner commented that a framework for public use should be included in the Annual Work Plans. John Wilson replied that the SFMP is the framework and that the Annual Work plans follows that framework. Mr. Leitner commented that there should be some type of public review process for mid-year actions/decisions/changes, and that this process should be included in the SFMP.

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 29, 2003 at 6:00 pm in the conference room at Wye Research and Education Center. There is no December meeting.

Public Comment Period:

There were no comments from public attendees. Citizens have 30 days to submit written comments to Michael Schofield regarding the FY04 Annual Work Plan.